
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 245

1920 Not dated

Unidentified Campaign Speech

Unidentified Speech or statement ¹⁹²⁰

Speaking in Marion, Ohio, yesterday, ^{7 Sep 18?} Senatro
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Speeches of Harding in Marion, Ohio:

New York Times;

July 6, 1920

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This should be followed by a direction to the President

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We might well put it this way:

"In view of the premises, the President is authorized and requested to invite, at an appropriate time, not later than the close of the war in Europe, all the great Governments of the world to send representatives to a conference which shall be charged with the duty of formulating a plan for a court of arbitration or other tribunal, to which disputed questions between nations shall be referred for adjudication and peaceful settlement." This would seem to cover the situation pretty thoroughly, for, of course, if these questions are to be referred for adjudication, power of some kind must be given to make the deliberations of the World Council effective. To this we might add further details as to the constitution of the Tribunal, and by no means neglect the vital idea of appropriating sufficient money to carry out the proposed plan.

What would you say, from reading the superheated eloquence of the political leaders of the opposition in regard to the Monroe Doctrine, our sacred duty to remain incaged in our own shell, after the fashion of China, irrespective of the progress of the rest of the

world, and other such trumpeted objections, would be the votes of these gentlemen on such legislation? If they are sincere, if this is not a political attempt to discredit the President at any cost, if this is not an effort to create political advantage where none exists, would not these gentlemen not only vote but speak loudly and violently against such legislation? If, on the other hand, they voted for it unanimously, might we not fairly charge them with political duplicity?

Gentlemen, what I have read is not a fanciful sketch of a proposed piece of legislation. It is a law of the United States of America, now on our statute books, passed by these gentlemen in 1916. I give you the full text, which you may verify for yourselves by reading the Naval Appropriation Act, approved by the President of the United States on August 29th, 1916:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to adjust and settle its international disputes through mediation or arbitration, to the end that war may be honorably avoided. It looks with apprehension and disfavor upon a general increase of armament throughout the world, but it realizes that no single nation can disarm, and that without a common agreement upon the subject every considerable power must maintain a relative standing in military strength.

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"If at any time before the construction authorized by this Act shall have been contracted for there shall have been established, with the cooperation of the United States of America, an international tribunal or tribunals competent to secure peaceful determinations of all international disputes, and which shall render unnecessary the maintenance of competitive armaments, then and in that case such naval expenditures as may be inconsistent with the engagements made in the establishment of such tribunal or tribunals may be suspended, when so ordered by the President of the United States."

May I call your attention to the fact that several of the most distinguished Republican leaders of the Senate, including Senator Lodge, voted for this law, not only once but twice; the first occasion being as members of the Naval Committee and the second as Senators of the United States. Is it not amazing that with such evidence of their insincerity written on the statute books of the country, they should have the effrontery to claim now that

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There is no one but what feels a certain admiration for an honest fighter, even if his cause be wrong, but for a man who fights foul, a man who is willing to barter his honest conviction for a mess of political pottage, do we not have an equal contempt? I am reminded of a picture which made a great impression on me in my youth. A frontier settler's hut, a band of wolves leaping hungrily against the cabin door; the mother and the children crouched in terror around the fireplace; the bar broken and the father's arm thrust through the staples all that stands between them and a horrible death. Now if my dear friend, Senator Lodge, had been in that cabin

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This would seem to cover the situation pretty thoroughly, for, of course, if these questions are to be referred for adjudication, power of some kind must be given to make the deliberations of the World Council effective. To this we might add further details as to the constitution of the Tribunal, and by no means neglect the vital item of appropriating sufficient money to carry out the proposed plan.

What would you say, from reading the superheated eloquence of the political leaders of the opposition in regard to the Monroe Doctrine, our sacred duty to remain incased in our own shell, after the fashion of China, irrespective of the progress of the rest of the

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"If at any time before the construction authorized by this Act shall have been contracted for there shall have been established, with the cooperation of the United States of America, an international tribunal or tribunals competent to secure peaceful determinations of all international disputes, and which shall render unnecessary the maintenance of competitive armaments, then and in that case such naval expenditures as may be inconsistent with the engagements made in the establishment of such tribunal or tribunals may be suspended, when so ordered by the President of the United States."

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